Counting Down to My Special Day: Reflections on the Few Days Before My Birthday in 2013.

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On November 27, I felt overwhelmed and stressed as my birthday was approaching within three days. I found myself pleading with God not to let this day come, feeling undeserving of such a celebration. The thought of my birthdate and its significance added to my anxiety. For the past two years, my only wish had been to regain the ability to walk, hoping it would make me feel more capable. I wished for a Saturday school holiday, yearning for solitude to celebrate alone. Last year's birthday incident had deeply affected me, leading me to prefer being by myself. The idea of dealing with people on my birthday terrified me.

On November 28, I began to contemplate why God had put me in this situation. We had a special class scheduled on Saturday, which happened to be my birthday. I prayed for understanding and guidance, uncertain whether I should repeat the experience that had made me cry the previous year. I anticipated people making fun of me, wishing me well while laughing behind my back, and perhaps thinking I didn't deserve to celebrate. I didn't want to share my birthday with anyone else, feeling uncomfortable about not wearing a colorful dress and being in the company of others. Overthinking had become a habit due to my disability.

On November 29, I felt unworthy of this life, fearing that my birthday would bring about some kind of pain, even though a part of me wished for it all to end. I longed for the night to never see the sunrise. In class, I pretended to misplace my mobile phone as an excuse to check it. Although the teacher understood my need for it in case of an emergency, I felt insulted and hurt.

I felt different from everyone, including my own parents. It seemed like I had nobody truly on my side. I never expected to go through what I did; all I desired was to walk, not for any showmanship. I wanted to walk to regain a sense of myself that I felt I had lost due to my disability. The fact that half of my body was paralyzed didn't make it difficult for me to consider the idea of losing it entirely. I felt like a burden to my parents. The most peculiar aspect was that despite having everything around me, I couldn't fully experience or feel anything. I oscillated between being the happiest and saddest person in the room. My life felt like it was coming to an end, not through suicide, but through a sense of hopelessness. It wasn't just my own life I feared for, but also the well-being of my parents. Over the past thirteen years, I had experienced many ups and downs, and it was only through the grace of God that I had managed to face it all. Without my faith, I felt I had lost so much of what I desired and accomplished very little, despite having God as my greatest source of support.

I made a conscious effort to distract myself from dwelling on painful thoughts and refrained from shedding tears. As mentioned before, my phone was taken by my teacher, and during the special class, Pradeep playfully poured a capful of water on me. Following

his lead, Sai approached and doused me with a full bottle of water, while some boys from my class playfully tore papers and scattered them around me, turning me into a makeshift Christmas tree. Despite the unexpected turn of events, I found joy in that special class. However, I hoped that such incidents wouldn't repeat the next day, my actual birthday. I prayed fervently to God, pleading not to let me cry on my special day. The following day, we had computer and English special classes scheduled, coinciding with my birthday.

What happened on my birthday???